

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 4, 2018

Congresswoman Jane Harman
President and CEO
Woodrow Wilson Intl Center for Scholars
Ronald Reagan Building & Intl Trade Center
One Woodrow Wilson Plaza
1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington DC 20004

Dear Congresswoman Harman:

I write in regards to “Chinese Influence Operations in the U.S.: Shedding Some Light on all the Heat,” an event to be hosted by the Wilson Center’s Kissinger Institute on May 9, 2018. This is a very important and timely topic.

One of the Center’s featured panelists is Mr. Huiyao Wang, founder and president of the Center for China and Globalization. The Center’s event notice, however, fails to disclose that Mr. Wang also currently holds a position in the United Front Work Department (UFWD) of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

According to the Center for China and Globalization’s website, Mr. Wang serves as “Standing Director of China Overseas Friendship Association of The Ministry of United Front.” According to his own personal website, he has held that position since 2013.

As you know, Chinese President and Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping has characterized the UFWD and its political influence activities as one of the CCP’s “magic weapons.” As such, the UFWD has come under needed and growing scrutiny in connection with the Chinese government’s increasingly aggressive displays of “sharp power” around the world, including in places like Australia, New Zealand and here in the United States.

Dr. Anne Marie Brady, a New Zealand professor and Wilson Center Global Fellow, undertook a seminal research project aptly titled *Magic Weapons: China’s Political Influence Activities Under Xi Jinping*, which painstakingly examined and documented “China’s expanded foreign influence activities in the Xi era” using New Zealand as a representative case study. She writes that China’s “attempts to guide, buy, or coerce political influence abroad are widespread.” These efforts are buoyed by the recent addition of 40,000 new cadres to the UFWD’s ranks.

According to a recent piece by Dr. Graeme Smith, a research fellow at the College of Asia and the Pacific at Australia National University, the UFWD “itself is now even more under the direct control of the CCP’s Central Committee via the Committee’s new Leading Small

Group on United Front Work, substantially increasing its ability to impose its policies downwards as intended.”

In light of what I’ve outlined above, what is known to be true of UFWD activities, and the fact that his own biography indicates that Mr. Wang’s work overlaps with many of the stated areas of focus for the UFWD, particularly the emphasis on the overseas Chinese community, I respectfully ask whether the Wilson Center’s Kissinger Institute was aware of Mr. Wang’s UFWD role and affiliation? If so, what was the rationale behind failing to disclose it in the event notice? And if not, how did his name emerge as a possible panelist?

I would also respectfully suggest that the Institute clarify his roles within the Chinese government to its audience.

I know that both you and the Wilson Center have a long commitment to the principle of free expression enshrined in our founding documents. Robust debate and discussion occur daily in think tanks throughout Washington, to the benefit of policymakers and the American public. Which is why it is very important that such institutions, especially those such as the Wilson Center which are funded at least in part by American taxpayers, clearly identify the foreign government affiliations of guest speakers, experts or others hoping to influence U.S. policymakers.

That this event’s focus is on Chinese influence operations creates an even greater imperative for transparency about Mr. Huiyao Wang’s roles and affiliations within the Chinese government apparatus.

I thank you in advance for your attention and timely response to these inquiries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Rubio".

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator